



# The Basics of Prime for Active Duty Servicemembers

TEO FS-19

"Your Passport to Quality Health"

Fact Sheet

*As an Active Duty member, you and your family deserve the best possible health care. The Department of Defense introduced TRICARE in response to the challenge of maintaining medical combat readiness while providing the best health care for all eligible personnel. TRICARE is designed to be as easy as possible for you and your family, and we are looking for new ways to make it easier every day. But we need your help to make it work. Why? Because your health care has to be managed — just as your bank account, your personnel records, or your vehicle registration needs to be managed. There isn't much that you need to do, but it is essential that you help us maintain your health care program.*

## What is TRICARE?


TRICARE is a regionally managed health care program for active duty and retired members of the uniformed services, their eligible family members, and survivors. TRICARE brings together the health care resources of the Army, Navy and Air Force and supplements them with networks of civilian health care professionals to provide better access and high quality service while maintaining the capability to support military operations.

## How much does it cost?

What are your premiums as a TRICARE Prime member? Zero. TRICARE Prime members pay no premiums, cost-shares, or deductables.

## Some of Your TRICARE Benefits

- For Prime enrollees, assignment to a **Primary Care Manager (PCM)** who will personally coordinate all of your health care needs.
- 52 **TRICARE Service Centers (TSCs)** in Europe, the Azores, and the Middle East staffed with health benefit experts and TRICARE Specialists. Your local TSC staff can help you with all aspects of your TRICARE benefit.
  - **Short waiting times.** Access-to-care standards that will ensure your medical needs are met on a timely basis.
  - **Preferred Provider Networks (PPN)** of host nation providers to supplement routine care at your military treatment facilities (MTF), and for routine and specialty care not available at your MTF. The PPN is available to provide care for beneficiaries who live in areas supported by a military treatment facility.
- **Bilingual Civilian Patient Liaisons**, who can assist you when you are seen by a host nation provider.

**FACT:** Active duty personnel and their family members enrolled in TRICARE Prime receive essentially free health care. An E-5 family of four would pay an average of over \$4000 a year plus co-pays for a comparable civilian health plan.

- **Free Self-care programs and books** that enable you to take charge of your continued good health.
- A free **Health Care Information Line®**. This toll-free nurse advice line can assist you 7 days per week, 24 hours per day when you have questions about your health, need some general health care advice, or want some help when making health care decisions. The service is available in all TRICARE Europe countries with a military treatment facility and is available at many of our geographically separated (remote) sites.

## Your Responsibilities

- Ensure that you and your family members are enrolled in the **Defense Eligibility Enrollment Reporting System (DEERS)** and keep this information up-to-date. You can make changes at your local personnel office.
- Ensure your and your family members' **military ID cards** are up-to-date. An expired ID card could potentially lead to medical claim denials.
- After you fully understand your choices (remember that your local TSC can help), you must **choose** if you want to enroll your family in **TRICARE Prime**.
- Active duty members are not automatically enrolled in TRICARE Prime. You must **contact your TRICARE Service Center to make sure you are properly enrolled** in Prime when you arrive at a new duty station.
- **Contact your PCM for an authorization whenever you need specialty medical care.** When traveling in the U.S., active duty members must have pre-authorization from their parent service for non-emergency civilian care.
- Complete and return **customer satisfaction surveys** promptly to help us improve your health care system.